

The Tragedy of Hamlet

Ophel. Doe you doubt that?

Laer. For *Hamlet*, and the trifling of his favour,
Hold it a fashion, and a toy in blood,
A violet in the youth of prime nature,
Forward, not permanent; sweet, not lasting,
The perfume and suppliance of a minute:
No more.

Ophel. No more but so.

Laer. Thinke it no more.

For nature cressant does not grow alone,
In thewes and bulkes, but as this Temple waxes,
The inward service of the mind and soule
Growes wide withall: perhaps he loves you now,
And now no soile nor cautell doth besmerch
The vertue of his will; but you must feare
His greatnesse wai'd, his will is not his owne.
He may not, as unvalued persons doe,
Crave for himselfe; for on his choice depends
The safety and health of this whole state,
And therefore must his choice be circumscrib'd
Unto the voice and yeelding of that body
Whereof he is the head: then if he saies he loves you,
It fits your wisdom so far to beleieve it,
As he in his particular act and place
May give his saying deed; which is no further
Than the maine voice of *Denmarke* goes withall.
Then weigh what losse your honour may sustaine,
If with too credent eare you list his songs,
Or loose your heart, or your chaste treasure open
To his unmaistred importunitie.
Feare it *Ophelia*, feare it my deare sister,
And keep you in the reare of your affection,
Out of the shot and danger of desire:
"The chariest maid is prodigall enough,
If she unmaske her beauty to the Moone:
"Vertue it selfe scapes not calumnious strokes;
"The canker galls the infant of the Spring
Too oft before their buttons be disclos'd,

And

Prince of Denmarke.

And in the morne and liquid dew of youth
Contagious blastments are most imminent.
Be ware then, best safety lyes in feare,
Youth to it selfe rebels though none else neere.

Ophel. I shall the effect of this good lesson keep,
As watchmen to my heart: But good my brother
Doe not as some ungracious Pastors doe,
Shew me the steep and thorny way of heaven,
Whiles a puffed and rechelesse Libertine,
Himselfe the primrose path of dalliance treads,
And reakes not his owne reed. *Enter Polonius.*

Laer. O feare me not;
I stay too long: but here my father comes.
A double blessing is a double grace,
Occasion smiles upon a second leave.

Pol. Yet here *Laertes*? aboard, aboard for shame,
The winde sits in the shoulder of your saile,
And you are staid for. There, my blessing with thee,
And these few precepts in thy memory
Look thou character: Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportion'd thought his act:
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar:
Those friends thou hast and their adoption tried,
Grapple them unto thy soule with hoops of Steele,
But doe not dull thy palme with entertainment
Of each new hatcht, unfledg'd courage: beware
Of entrance to a quarrell, but being in,
Bear't that th'opposer may beware of thee:
Give every man thy eare, but few thy voice;
Take each mans censure, but reserve thy judgement:
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
But not exprest in fancy; rich, not gaudy;
For the apparell oft proclaimes the man,
And they in *France* of the best ranke and station,
Are of a most select and generous chiefe in that:
Neither a borrower nor a lender boy,
For love oft loses both it selfe and friend;
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.

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